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OLD VALENCIENNES PORCELAIN AND FAIENCE.

BY ÉDOUARD GARNIER.

VALENCIENNES occupies quite a distinct position in the history of French industry, not only on account of its production of rare laces, but also on account of its factory for the manufacture of hard porcelain, established in 1785. The products of this factory are not inferior in any respect to those made by second-class factories towards the close of the eighteenth century, and from the point of view of ceramic technology it merits distinction as having been the first to substitute coal for wood charcoal in baking china, a method followed with constantly increasing success.

The art of manufacturing pottery in the district of Valenciennes dates back many years,—as early as the fifteenth century. Englefontaine made glazed pottery, decorated somewhat crudely but with originality, and since 1718 the successful factory at Saint-Amand-les-Eaux has produced most interesting ware, though not quite so marked in character as that proceeding from the three great centres of ceramic production at that period, Rouen, Nevers, and Moustiers.

After the treaty of Utrecht, which deprived France of Tournay and its dependencies with the exception of the little village of Saint-Amand, about twelve kilometres from Valenciennes, Pierre-Joseph Fauquez, a Tournay potter, unwilling to abandon the French

market, established the Saint-Amand pottery, which in 1741 passed into the hands of his son Pierre-François-Joseph; the latter, in 1773, gave it in turn to his son, Jean-Baptiste-Joseph, who established a factory for the manufacture of china at Valenciennes, continuing at the same time the business at Saint-Amand until 1794, when he was forced to emigrate.

It would be almost impossible to give a clear account of the different phases of decoration through which the Saint-Amand faience has passed; nothing is known of the early methods practised in this factory, but it is probable that, as in all second-class establishments, the styles then in vogue were copied. It must be said, however, that we have never discovered servile imitation of the products of the Rouen, Nevers, and Moustiers factories in the Saint-Amand faience bearing the factory stamp, nor even in the unstamped pieces which are clearly of Saint-Amand manufacture as evidenced by their composition,—a fine clay of close texture, white when broken, and covered with a clear enamel, so thickly laid on as to enlarge the shape; this fault is especially noticeable in the early products of the factory.

There were two styles of decoration in great favor at Saint-Amand: one was obtained by raised work, and the other by decoration in the true sense

of the term,—that is, by painting. The first comprises pieces in the style called rock-work, so popular about the middle of the eighteenth century that articles in common use were patterned

designs. The raised portions of these pieces, which lack delicacy on account of the thick enamel with which they are covered, are colored a pure, bright red, often blended with green, relieved

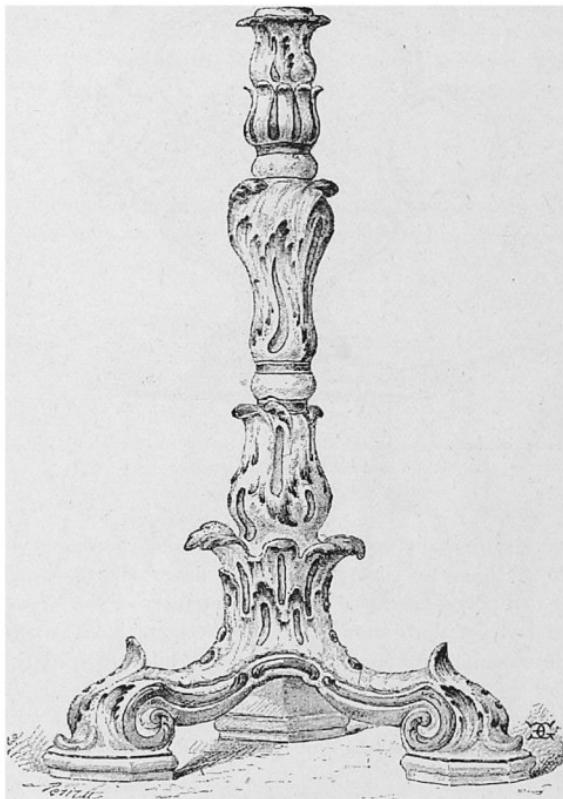


FIG. 1.—FAÏENCE CANDLESTICK FROM THE POTTERY OF SAINT-AMAND-LES-EAUX.

Decorated with bright red and green shaded with manganese.

(Collection of Dr. Maugin, Douai)

after it. These articles included candlesticks, like that illustrated in Fig. 1 and belonging to the interesting collection of Dr. Maugin, Douai, flower-pots, cruets, bouquet-holders (Fig. 2), and window-garden stands in varied

against a rim of violet or very deep manganese; the enamel is a beautiful milky white. Often wreaths of flowers or large bouquets of bright flowers are shown in addition to the raised work (Fig. 3). This style of decora-

tion, made in imitation of the Strasburg ware, probably by painters from Hanong, is, as a rule, coarsely executed,

observation of the decoration in raised white upon Persian blue enamel, which had its rise at Nevers and was imitated

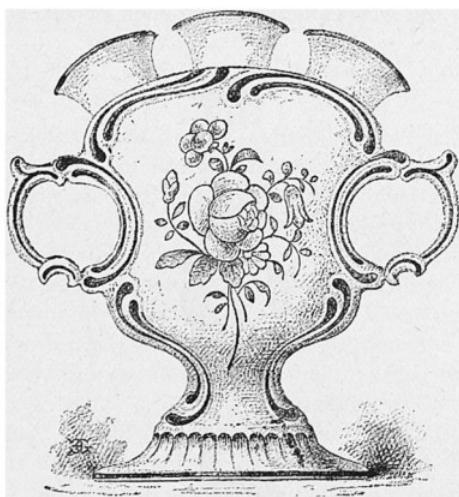


FIG. 2.—CHINA BOUQUET-HOLDER FROM THE FACTORY OF SAINT-AMAND-LES-EAUX.

Variegated colors touched with black.

(Collection of the late Edmond Paix, Douai)

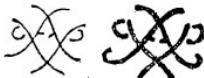
but occasionally the finish and colors are comparable to the finest specimens of ceramic art of that period (Fig. 4).

The second style of decoration peculiar to Saint-Amand, although apparently a sort of reminiscence of a process used in Italy in the sixteenth century and called *bianco sopra bianco*, consisted in the employment of a soft gray enamel, sometimes verging upon blue, ornamented with finely-executed designs in raised white. This is the most characteristic type of Saint-Amand faience; but the skilful potters of the Saint-Amand factory do not appear to have attained this result by intentional imitation of Italian majolica, of which it is suggestive only through similarity of process, so much as by

by the Rouen potters, who, however, were never able to attain the depth and intensity of the Nevers blue. Certain pieces of Saint-Amand pottery in raised white upon dark blue, more rare than the decorations upon gray ground, and less carefully executed than the Nevers or Rouen pottery, seem to confirm this supposition.

The raised white decorations upon these delicately-tinted grounds consisted of sprigs of flowers (Fig. 7) or flowering branches in which the design was repeated. Some plates, evidently designed as a reminder of the principal industry of the country, had borders of fine lace-like patterns. This decoration was frequently supplemented by many-hued bouquets, figures, and landscapes:

these last, particularly during the last years of the existence of the factory, were usually painted in cameo blue (Fig. 6). Besides these plates, which are frequently met, articles thus decorated were inlaid fountains, especially those in dolphin shape in cameo blue, flower-pots, candlesticks, etc. Most of these articles are marked in the following manner :



There are many theories concerning the composition of this sign, but the most

two 's's and an *A* (Saint-Amand) and answer as a rough copy of the royal cipher which stamps the Sèvres ware. This same mark, in more legible form with the additional letters *S* and *A* (Saint-Amand), is also found on the fine faience, ordinarily designated under the name of pipe-clay, manufactured at Saint-Amand, probably during a very short period, judging from its rarity :



Among the Saint-Amand decorators whose names have been preserved, we

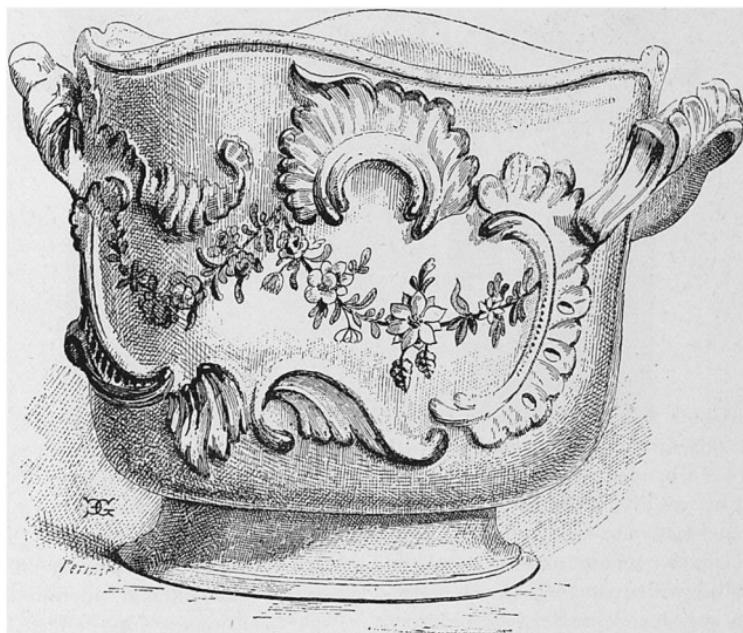


FIG. 3.—FAÏENCE FONT FROM SAINT-AMAND-LÈS-EAUX.

Relief decoration in red with wreaths of painted flowers outlined in black.

(Collection of M. Maillard, Valenciennes)

plausible seems to be that it is formed of the letters *p* (Pierre) and *f* (Fauquez) arranged so ingeniously that they form

find Louis-Alexandre Gaudry, an artist of some ability, who died in 1815, and Joseph Fernig, who was also employed

in the china-factory at Valenciennes : they probably introduced Saxony decoration, burned by slow fire upon hard enamel, as well as the manufacture of fine faience. Louis Watteau,—or Watteau de Lille, as he is usually styled,—who was called to Saint-Amand in 1782 to decorate the rooms of the Provost's house, seems to have exercised a wide influence upon the artistic development of the manufactory : it was probably at his suggestion that the Saint-Amand factory executed some very rare specimens, decorated in the most artistic

rights and privileges for the term of ten years, to found a factory at Valenciennes for the manufacture of hard porcelain, in charge of which he placed Michel Vannier, of Orleans, who was the first to conceive the idea of substituting coal for wood charcoal* in baking china, and who had tried this mode of baking in the Leperre factory at Lille,[†] where he had been employed. The concession made to Fauquez upon his application was accorded only upon condition that he should feed said factory with coal.



FIG. 4.—FAIENCE JARDINIÈRE FROM SAINT-AMAND-LES-EAUX.

Variegated decoration in the style of Strasbourg ware.

(Collection of the late M. Paix, Douai)

style, both as to drawing and painting ; but, notwithstanding a tradition which has been handed down, it is not likely that he was ever attached to the Saint-Amand factory as a decorator of china.

Fauquez, whose activity was not satisfied with managing his china-factory, asked and obtained by order of the Council of State, dated May 24, 1785, the authority, with exclusive

In 1787, in consequence of a disagreement, the cause of which is unknown, and which resulted in a lawsuit, Fauquez, who probably had a joint interest with his brother-in-law, Laminary, at one time member of the Flanders Parliament and superintendent of the Valenciennes Mont-de-Piété, was obliged to cede to the latter all interest in the factory which he had created,

the back of which is the following inscription : "Baked by coal in 1785, at Lille, Flanders." This method seems to have been abandoned after Vannier's departure for Valenciennes.

*Toward the close of the seventeenth century coal was employed in Perrot's glass-works, at Orleans.

[†]The Sèvres Museum contains a saucer, on

and which soon attained such a state of prosperity that one hundred workmen were employed, twelve of whom were painters, and several of whom, according to the declaration made later by Lamoninary, earned as much as twenty or twenty-four pounds a day. The great economy* resulting

Amand wares were no sooner made than they were sold on easy terms to neighboring towns and merchants. The sales were so heavy and the demand so great that it was not until 1792 that the proprietor was able to realize his project of establishing factories in the principal towns of France

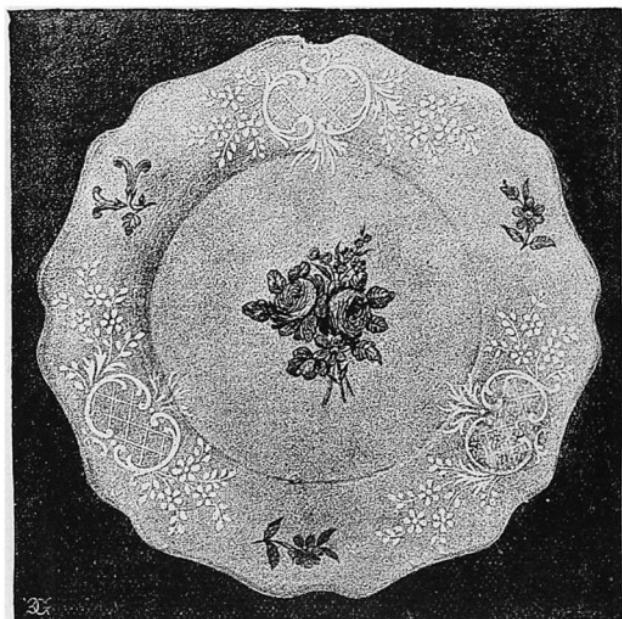


FIG. 5.—PLATE IN SAINT-AMAND FAÏENCE.
Raised white on gray enamel, polychrome decoration.
(Collection of Ed. Garnier)

from the employment of coal enabled this factory to sell its porcelain at a much lower price than rival establishments could afford. "Competition was so greatly in its favor," says Dieudonné in his statistics, "that the Saint-

and abroad, and it was only by refusing a large number of special orders for more than a year that he was in a position to open stores at Lille, Douai, Cambrai, Paris, Mons, Brussels, and Vienna, where there was a demand for

* Out of a sum of £150,000 spent annually for material and cost of manufacturing, etc., the sum expended for coal amounted to only £800.

The kaolin came directly from the Saint-Yrieix quarries.

his china, when circumstances brought about the failure of this important manufactory."

These circumstances were due rather to Lamominary's conduct during the Revolution than to any commercial or industrial crisis at this period. In 1789,

tember, 1793, but escaped, and re-entered Valenciennes with the Austrian army. Again resuming the duties of provost, he made himself conspicuous by the imprudent zeal and exhibition of servility with which he arranged the entrance into Valenciennes of "His Im-

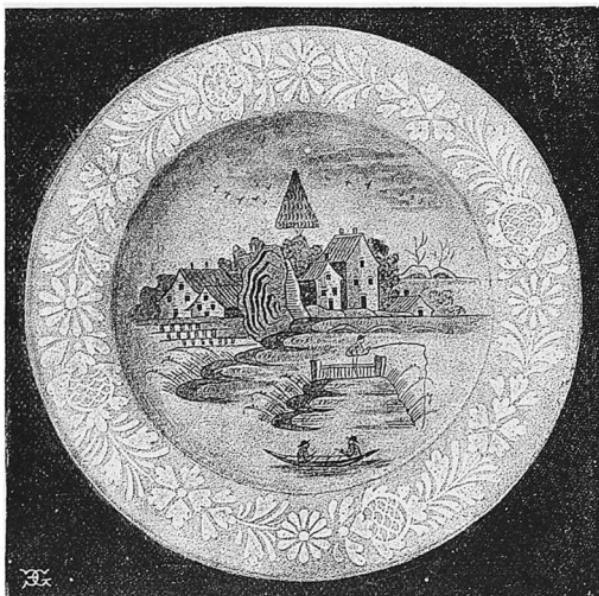


FIG. 6.—SAINT-AMAND FAIENCE PLATE.
Raised white on blue-gray enamel decorated in cameo blue. Last period of the manufacture.
(Collection of the late M. Féris, Brussels)

Lamominary, who was a man of aristocratic habits and training and incapable of making any concession to new ideas, was made provost-marshall and captain of the National Guard: in the discharge of these duties he exercised such extreme severity that ill-feeling was aroused against him. He was condemned to death upon the 3d of Sep-

tember and Royal Majesty, the grandest sovereign in Europe, the august liberator," etc., requesting that the population should permit the world to see the "touching spectacle of a tender and beloved father in the midst of his children." Some months later the victorious French army again took possession of the town, and Lamominary, once

more obliged to depart hastily, took refuge first at Mons, then at Coblenz, and afterward at Dusseldorf.*

The new administration, understanding the importance of retaining such a prosperous industry as that of Valenciennes, refused all offers of rival factories to buy the wares, raw material, and factory-works from Lamoninary.

Lamoninary was allowed to return to France. At that date his factory alone remained to him of all his past splendor, but in such a ruined and devastated condition that, notwithstanding the good will which the prefect Dieudonné exhibited toward him in 1801, and the interest with which the First Consul, on his road to Douai in 1803, ex-



FIG. 7.—BOUILLON-TUREEN IN VALENCIENNES PORCELAIN.
Cameo brown and gold decoration.
(Valenciennes Museum)

The few influential friends whom the latter had preserved, still hoping to see him return to France, drew the negotiations out endlessly, and postponed as long as possible the disadvantageous sale to which the manufactory would be subjected as the "property of a refugee." So much time was exhausted in making and changing inventories that the sale did not take place before

amined the specimens of the old factory, he found it impossible to resume work. The buildings were sold January 30, 1810, and the once-successful manufacturer, now completely impoverished, went to live with a married daughter in Belgium, where he passed the remaining years of his long life in sadness.

Valenciennes china is conspicuous the manufacture of faïence and porcelain in the district of Valenciennes.

*It is to the indefatigable and intelligent researches of Dr. Lejeal that we are indebted for these and so many other particulars concerning

for its perfect make and the whiteness, fine quality, and transparency of its paste; it is usually decorated with painted landscapes in cameo brown, black, or manganese violet, delicately and finely executed, but somewhat dull in appearance on account of the lack of glazing (Figs. 7, 8, 9); this



FIG. 8.—VALENCIENNES CREAM-PITCHER.
Cameo brown, sepia and gold decoration.
(Collection of M. Maillart, Valenciennes)

sault is less noticeable in pieces that are decorated with colored wreaths, single flowers, and sprays; the borders are usually designs of lace-like tracery in gold, and wreaths or festoons of leaves and flowers; the gold is sparse, but pure and beautiful. (Fig. 10.) "Everything was manufactured there," says Dieudonné, "that is ordinarily found in an eminently successful factory,—

vases, bisque figures, dishes, plates, soup-bowls, trays, cups, coffee-pots, egg-cups, breakfast-services, etc. I have seen a group from this factory, representing the Descent from the Cross, copied from Rubens's beautiful painting: this is a masterpiece, whether regarded from the point of view of attitude and expression, or the fineness of the cream-white paste, or the proportions and finish of the work. The sight of such a rare specimen excites regret that such a manufactory should not be re-established."

This group, which is now in the Valenciennes Museum, may be regarded as one of the most interesting of French specimens in ceramic art: it is sixty centimetres high, and is composed of seven skilfully-modelled figures, copied from the celebrated Antwerp painting, with some decided changes, due to the nature of the material employed rather than to a desire to make an original work by departing widely from the model. Another copy was, it seems, given by Lamoignon to Louis XVI.: the fate of this is unknown.

Dr. Lejeal made a list, from notes given him by the manufacturer's grandson, of thirty-two groups or bisque figures made at the Valenciennes factory: unfortunately, these pieces were not stamped, and it is difficult to identify them or trace their relationship to the short titles of the list, such as Figure with a Cage, Fisherman, Shepherd, Peasant girl, etc. The china is usually stamped with the following marks:



FAUQUEZ,
VALENCIENNES.



FAUQUEZ-LAMONINAY,
VALENCIENNES.



LAMONINAY,
VALENCIENNES.

These are in blue or brown, beneath the glazing, or in red or brownish red, upon the enamel. A cup in the Sèvres Museum is marked Valenciennes.

Ceramic industry did not disappear in France with the failure of the Lamominary factory: it appeared some

diction, founded a branch factory for the manufacture of their soft porcelain at Saint-Amand. Adhering to the methods and styles followed in fashioning old-time soft porcelain,—we will touch later upon the manner in which Tournay, in the last century, deprived



FIG. 9.—VALENCIENNES CUP À LA REINE.

Cameo brown, sepia and gold.

(Maillart Collection)

years later in a flourishing condition at Saint-Amand, not, however, under the management of Fauquez, who, as well as his brother-in-law, had been forced to emigrate, and had likewise been unable, upon his return to France in 1801, to infuse new life into his old establishment, but under the direction of the MM. Bettignies, of Tournay, who, after the treaties of 1815 had again removed their town from French juris-

the royal works at Sèvres of some of their best workmen,—the new proprietors, while continuing to supply the market with faience that was no longer artistic, produced soft porcelain ware which was eagerly seized upon by counterfeiters, who decorated and sold it, especially abroad, as *Old Sèvres*. All the old vases, models of which were preserved at Sèvres, were reproduced at Saint-Amand, and we have

seen in several large collections, particularly in England, so-called specimens of Old Sèvres ware, for which enormous prices had been paid, and which really came from the Saint-Amand ovens in a pure white state

in a manner to deceive rich and too confiding collectors.

Although this factory has produced some ware with modern style of decoration comparable to the products of other factories, it limited itself at one

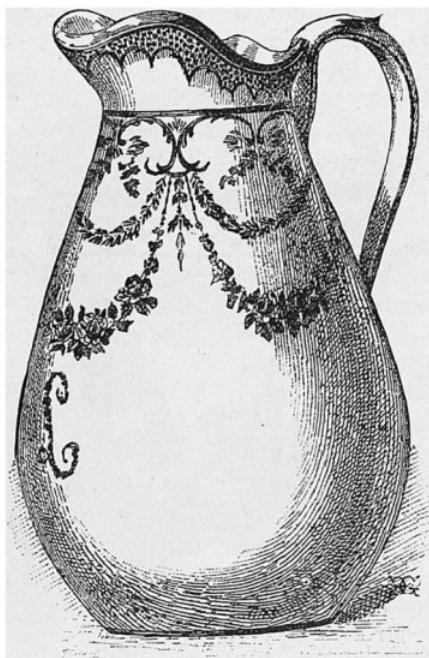


FIG. 10.—SMALL VALENCIENNES PITCHER.

Polychrome decoration, violet and gold.

(Lejeal Collection)

and were then decorated by artists who are still living. It must be said, in justice to the directors of the factory and to the artists employed, that they had no share in this dishonest traffic, as the pieces had already passed from their hands when they were stamped

time too closely to servile imitations of Old Sèvres, a style too exclusive to find a remunerative market: this branch was consequently abandoned, and Saint-Amand now produces only common pottery, far removed from the faience of Fauquez or the porcelain of Lamoninary.